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(BW)(CA-RENEWABLE-ENERGY) Consumer Demand Prompts New
California Solar Plant

Business/News Editors

SACRAMENTO, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sept. 7, 1999--The first commercial utility-scale solar power plant to be built in California in direct response to consumer demands for clean power will be located in Hopland, California and will begin selling its electricity into the state electric grid later this month.

The 132 kw array of photovoltaic (PV) panels will be built, owned and operated by GPU Solar and located at Hopland, California's Real Goods Solar Living Center -- a 12-acre demonstration site that highlights new cutting technologies designed to foster a more sustainable lifestyle. The power generated by the PV panels -- which convert sunlight directly into electricity -- will be purchased by GreenMountain.com to be included as part of the Green Mountain Energy power blends which are made up of 100% renewable energy sources.

"California consumers can help stimulate advances in renewable energy technologies," said Steven Kelly, executive director of the Renewable Energy Marketing Board (REMB). "Since solar energy has always been a favorite of consumers, I'm glad to see GreenMountain.com develop a facility that can be easily expanded to respond to demands of consumers for green electricity," he added.

Hopland, located about two hours north of San Francisco on Highway 101, is a fitting site for the new PV power plant, which consist of four independent structures that will only take one month to construct. Hopland claims to have more PV per capita than any other city in the world. Since an average of 150,000 visitors come by the Real Goods Solar Living Center every year, the facility will also serve as an excellent addition to this educational center.

"Most California consumers don't realize that if their home relies upon generic electricity, it releases as much as three tons of the carbon dioxide (CO2), a pollutant linked to global climate change, every year," said Julie Blunden, president of Green Mountain's Western Region. "New solar plants such as this one reduce our reliance upon fossil fuels such as coal, which is the dirtiest of fossil fuels yet is serving more and more of California's demand for electricity over the past year. Customers have a clear choice if they want to help reduce CO2 emissions and preserve this planet for future generations," added Blunden.

This solar plant is one of the first bulk solar projects to be developed since California's power market was restructured in April of last year. In addition to producing solar energy at the site, Real Goods purchases Green Mountain's "Wind For the Future2.0 " product, which relies upon new wind turbines to supply a quarter of the electricity. The rest of this power blend comes from other renewable sources such as geothermal steam, biomass and small scale hydroelectric. The Real Goods' Solar Living Center, its corporate offices in Santa Rosa and its retail store in Berkeley all purchase Green Mountain's "Wind For The Future2.0" product.

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